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This document is a report of the Joint Committee on Professional Standards Boards appointed by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEPTS), and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). A background section reviews the organization and responsibilities of the 11 legally established state professional standards boards presently functioning or in the planning stage. The second section presents a rationale for the creation in each state of a legally established board charged with the responsibility to advise the state department of education on policy and standards related to licensure of teachers; revocation or suspension of licenses; review of waiver of certification requirements; assignment of teachers; accreditation of teacher education; programs, studies, and research designed to improve teacher education, including continuing education. The final section offers 16 specific suggestions (regarding the size, selection, composition, authority, policies, functions, and financing of such boards) for use by educational associations, institutions, and groups in states desiring to build a "legal bridge for professional self-determination" through the teaching profession's involvement and responsibility for professional standards. (JS)

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GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARDS

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GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARDS

To the Reader

This report deals with the question of an organization to develop standards for the teaching profession. It complements Professional Practices Regulations: A Plan for Action,[1] which deals with the application of standards to the individual.

Essential to this idea is the involvement of the entire profession in determining standards for teacher education, certification, and assignment as they apply to state agencies, colleges, and professional groups. The concept of the responsibility of the teaching profession for its own standards has been growing slowly for more than a century, but it is only since 1945 that there have been significant developments at the state level. As state educational organizations have developed plans and legislation to implement this goal, the complexity of the problem, as well as possible solutions, has come into sharper focus.

After studying the several professional standards boards at present functioning or in the planning stage, the Joint Committee agreed to accept and support the concept of the teaching profession's involvement and responsibility for professional standards. Although, in the light of personal experience or local legal limitations, the Committee sometimes disagreed as to specific operational or organizational details, there was unanimity on principle.

This document is in a sense a progress report to the teaching profession, an analysis of the best thinking to date of the means of attaining professional rights with professional responsibility. It is, then, a point of departure, a base for further action to meet the needs of each state.

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[1]National Education Association, National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards. Professional Practices Regulations: A Plan for Action. Washington, D.C.: the Commission, 1965.

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The Joint Committee on Professional Standards Boards wishes to acknowlege with appreciation the contribution of individuals in states where professional standards boards are in operation or under study. We also wish to thank the consultative staff of AACTE, NASDTEC, and NCTEPS for their help and counsel in preparing this report.

I. Introduction

This document is an ad hoc committee report; the views expressed herein have not been endorsed or approved by the groups appointing members to the Committee. In November 1964, The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), The National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEPS), and The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) agreed to initiate a joint committee to study and make recommendations regarding the establishment and function of professional standards boards. In addition, The Department of Classroom Teachers (NEA), The American Association of School Administrators, and The Council of Chief State School Officers were invited to participate directly by appointing members to the committee. NASDTEC, NCTEPS, and AACTE agreed to furnish assistance and consultative services. Each agency paid the expenses of its own committee members.

The Committee members and staff consultants responsible for this report are listed below:

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The Committee was charged with the following task:

1. To review (and, if possible, evaluate current boards and proposed boards).

2. To study and make recommendations regarding the legal, political, financial, professional, and educational problems relating to the establishment and work of a professional standards board.

3. To study and make recommendations regarding the relationships which might and should exist between a standards board and (a) an advisory council on teacher education, (b) a state board of education, (c) the chief state school officer, (d) the state director of teacher education and certification, (e) professional education associations, (f) colleges and universities, (g) the state TEPS commission, (h) regional and national accrediting agencies, and (i) a professional practices commission.

4. To suggest guidelines to states working toward the development of a professional standards board (e.g., guidelines relative to size, selection, composition, authority, policies, functions, financing).

5. To examine the theoretical and practical case for and against a professional standards board; to provide a rationale for (or against) the professional standards board idea.

6. To make recommendations to NASDTEC, NCTEPS, and AACTE as to what the position of each of these organizations should be relative to professional standards boards.

Committee members, selected because of their experience and knowledge, were encouraged to act individually as experts studying a particular problem rather than representing a specific organization, state, or area of the country. Accordingly, it was agreed from the beginning that this report would present the views of the Committee and that sponsoring organizations might or might not endorse all or any part of it.

This document represents the collective efforts of the committee and consultants. It is offered as a guide for those interested in establishing professional standards boards.[2]

II. Background Information

Over the past thirty-five years, state departments of education[3] have been providing more and more opportunities for members of the teaching profession to participate in formulating certification requirements. Such participation began with the appointment of extralegal advisory councils.

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[1]A professional standards board is defined by the NCTEPS as a "nonpolitical, legally recognized agency (e.g., board, commission, or council) assigned responsibility for (a) developing requirements and policies governing accreditation of teacher education institutions, the issuance and revocation of licenses, and the assignment of personnel; and (b) conducting studies designed to improve standards of licensure, accreditation, and assignment."

[2] The state department of education as used herein is a collective term including the chief state school officer, his professional staff, and the respective state board of education in states having such boards.

By 1964, forty-eight states had some form of advisory machinery for teacher education and certification.[4] This machinery included councils, committees, standards commissions, state boards of examiners, and in some cases, state teacher education and professional standards commissions. The function of these groups vary greatly from state to state.

Eleven of the forty-eight (Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, and Texas) have advisory bodies or commissions related to teacher education and certification which are established by law. Some of these have a degree of decision-making power. In Indiana, which in a way belongs on this list, one of three legal commissions constituting the State Board of Education is authorized to exercise all power. This commission has six members appointed by the governor, four of whom must be from the teaching profession.

Colorado has a State Board of Teacher Certification created by law. Its eight members, who must be actively engaged in educational work, are appointed by the State Board of Education. Illinois has a similar board of twelve members, which has legal authority to issue and revoke certificates and approve teacher education programs. The New Jersey State Board of Examiners is a legal body consisting of twelve members, all educators, with similar functions. The Texas Board of Examiners is appointed by the state commissioner and approved by the State Board of Education; its twenty-one members are all practicing educators from all levels. Its major duties are to conduct studies related to teacher education and certification and advise the commissioner on standards related to teacher education, certification, and accreditation.

In Alaska, Kentucky, and North Dakota, there are professional practices acts which could involve commissions in the revocation of certificates. Kentucky also has a Council on Higher Education which has some legal responsibility for establishing standards for teacher education. In fact, several states have a council of this kind.

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[4]For further description see Armstrong, W. Earl, and Stinnett, T. M. A Manual on Certification Requirements for School Personnel in the United States. Washington, D. C.: National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, National Education Association, 1964. pp. 11-13, 210-16.

In 1965, the Oregon Legislature created the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, which is charged with continuous study of teacher standards and practices and is required to make recommendations to the State Board of Education in the areas of certification, standards for teaching competence, and ethical performance of teaching and administrative duties. If requested to do so, this 16-member commission is also required to hold investigations, conduct hearings, and make recommendations concerning the issuance, suspension, or revocation of certificates. In carrying out this responsibility, the Commission is empowered to subpoena witnesses. In specific cases, it also recommends waiver of certificate requirements.

Most state advisory groups to state departments of education are extralegal; they range in size from 8 to 225 members. Collectively, these committees, councils, and boards make recommendations regarding teacher education and have varying degrees of influence, depending upon the particular state. Some are too large to be effective; others have little responsibility; but some are highly effective and do carry out important functions.

Recently the membership of advisory groups has tended to become more representative of all segments of the teaching profession. For example, there has been considerable effort to involve more and more liberal arts personnel; elementary and secondary classroom teachers have become more involved in problems related to the substance of teacher education, accreditation, and certification requirements.

Members of the teaching profession[5] are usually employed in a specific institution, organization, or agency, but more often than not, they also play a variety of professional roles in institutions, organizations, or agencies other than their place of employment. For example, there has grown up a highly complex system of relationships among the various segments of the profession, and the purposes for these relationships vary a great deal.

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[5] For purposes of this report, the term teaching profession includes classroom teachers, supervisors, administrators, researchers, and specialists who provide professional services in schools, colleges, universities, professional association, learned societies, accrediting agencies, government offices, and any other organized formal program of education.

State departments of education are by law responsible for standards that affect certified personnel. Such standards have to do with accreditation of teacher education, continuing education for teachers, and assignment of teachers, to mention but a few. Not only individuals are involved but also the schools, teacher education institutions, accrediting agencies, professional associations and societies, and now the federal government.

The functions of professional standards boards, as defined earlier, do not directly include the handling of individual cases involving ethics, competence, and academic freedom, although such matters are certainly related. The following distinctions between professional standards boards and professional practices commissions were spelled out in an earlier report.[6] Professional standards board was used to mean an official body at the state level to which responsibility was assigned for (a) developing requirements and policies governing accreditation of teacher education institutions, issuance and revocation of licenses, and assignment of personnel; and (b) conducting studies designed to improve standards of licensure, accreditation, and assignment. The term professional practices commission was used to mean an official body at the state level which deals with matters of ethics, competence, and academic freedom where protective or disciplinary action may be needed on an individual case basis.

Some state bodies have combined functions, a good example being Oregon's Teacher Standards and Practices Commission mentioned earlier. There is, however, divided opinion on this subject. One thesis is that the board or commission which deals with requirements for and issuance of licenses and related problems should not also deal with individual cases of ethics and competency which may entail the revocation of a license. The Oregon rationale holds that the body responsible for developing standards pertaining to professional practices is in a much better position to interpret those standards than a

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[6]Professional Practices Regulations: A Plan for Action, op.cit., p. 5.

group of professional people who have not been so involved. Others argue that the Oregon arrangement[7] eliminates checks and balances. There is agreement that where there are two bodies they should be closely related and that recommendations should be interchanged and respected.

III. Rationale for Professional Standards Boards

Great transition is under way in most aspects of teacher education, including undergraduate and graduate programs, licensing procedures, program accreditation, continuing education, and research and experimentation. The state departments of education are involved to some degree in all these functions.

In concert with colleges and universities, the state departments of education will have increasing responsibility for stronger and ever more dynamic leadership in all areas of teacher education. Therefore, the chief state school officer and his staff will need the support and counsel of the best and wisest people the profession has to offer on a regular and continuous basis.

Policy decisions affecting teacher education made in state departments of education often have far-reaching effects; therefore, those who must comply with decisions should have some participation in making them. Surely improvement in teacher education and related areas requires leadership not only at the state department level but at all levels of education. Strong leadership requires commitment, and commitment requires involvement. Involvement, in turn, requires some type of formal procedure that will assure interested groups within the teaching profession not only the prerogative but the responsibility of being heard.

In making these observations, it should be emphasized that the established legal responsibilities of the respective state departments of education are not in question. There can be no transfer of fixed responsibility for ultimate decisions which are the legal responsibility of the state department of education as established by the people

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[7]Oregon has a rather unique tenure law which complements their legal commission.

of a state. But it is equally important to recognize that to delegate responsibility to representative professionals is in keeping with the best traditions of a free and open society. This is especially true in governing the standards of a profession. To delegate a right or responsibility is not to give it up--it is often in the public interest to delegate certain rights to the people more qualified to make highly technical decisions. Furthermore, the responsibility for making a decision does not preclude a process of decision making which includes those most directly involved. Leadership must make use of the talent around it.

Most state department policies related to teacher education necessarily pervade the interests of a variety of different types of teacher education institutions, both in and out of state, as well as of accrediting bodies, local school districts, individual practitioners, and the general public. Obviously, the public interest must be paramount; even through there will be controversy, there need not be basic conflicts between public and professional interests. However, this assumes a consensus on the reasons for the existence of the teaching profession--to provide education through effective teaching services, and through constant improvement of these services, to improve education. The problem is how to guarantee adequate services.

State departments of education are strategically situated to provide ever greater leadership in tackling the problems of teacher education. Coordinated effort is needed to assure greater participation of the various interests in determining policy and suggested programs. Here state departments sometimes are and certainly should be focal. This is not to imply that they should invade the independence of teacher education institutions or any other agency. Rather they should, as some do, exercise a strong liberating force by encouraging higher standards through their support of flexibility in experimentation and variations in teacher education programs. Experiments that liberate often bypass existing standards. In some situations, so-called higher standards actually may hinder rather than improve teaching services. A liberating force can best be created or supported by broad participation, whereby those most knowledgeable about any subject

or area of concern are represented and consulted about decisions which relate to the success or failure of a state in providing and maintaining a competent and adequate teaching force. These forces cannot be superimposed.

Another compelling reason for a professional standards board in each state is that it establishes an official channel through which individual practitioners, learned societies, and faculties can be heard. Moreover, when a professional board is in a position to advise, the tendency to look upon the state department as just another government bureaucracy with an impenetrable veneer is reduced. Obviously, organization is essential to an administration, but it can be inclusive and open rather than exclusive and closed, both in terms of decision making and leadership. The more successful state departments are organized in this way.

It is timely, therefore, for educational associations, institutions, and educational groups to look to their respective state legislatures to create legally established professional standards boards. In states where such machinery already exists, a reevaluation may be in order. As noted earlier, it is not unusual for states to have a legal advisory board adjunct to the state department of education.

IV. Some Concrete Suggestions

It is always hazardous to make concrete suggestions for implementation where there are so many interests to be served. However, educators too often are prone to stop with careful analyses. The next step leading to action is often not taken, especially in matters related to law, for fear that machinery will become stifling to experimentation and variation in approach. It is often argued that laws tend to crystalize and maintain the status quo, but what is advocated here is a breach with the status quo. Any legislation should provide as much as possible for built-in self-correction. One way to accomplish this is to make the continuance of the professional standards board subject to a periodic legislative review every four or five years by a special interim task force which could include legislators, educators, and laymen. The board's thinking does not have to become standardized merely because it is done in the context of serving in a legal capacity. Accordingly, the suggestions here must be expanded upon. Surely any

such boards cannot be all things to all interests in the profession; its function is to be advisory. Wise members of a board will recognize the importance of considering interests other than their own and will institute channels through which others may be heard. They will call in consultants and interest groups, as needed, to study and recommend in particular situations; they will see to it that the chief state school officer and his staff receive the best advice the profession has to offer.

The following specific suggestions for developing or evaluating professional advisory bodies, which the Committee has chosen to call professional standards boards, are offered as guidelines only. It is the Committee's hope that they will precipitate discussion and thoughtful analysis. Obviously, each state must create its own specific legislative machinery.

1. Each state should provide for a legally established professional standards board charged with the responsibility to <u>advise</u> the state department of education on policies and standards related to:

a. licensure of teachers

b. revocation or suspension of licenses

c. review of waiver of certification requirements

d. assignment of teachers

e. accreditation of teacher education

f. programs, studies, and research designed to improve teacher education, including continuing education for teachers.

<u>Note</u>: There is division of opinion. Many believe that these boards should have decision-making power subject to veto of tne state department of education. In the opinion of this Committee, such boards should be advisory at this state of the development of a profession of teaching, but any state willing to experiment with giving them decision-making power should be encouraged.

2. The state department of education should be required to seek the advice of the professional standards board prior to the proposing or establishing of policies or regulations relative to any of the functions listed in Item 1.

3. The professional standards board should be appointed by either the state department of education or the governor. There are strong feelings about who should have the power to appoint--a rationale could be built for either case conditioned by the prevailing conditions.

4. The membership of the board should range in size from nine to eighteen, with a balanced representation of the profession to insure classroom teacher participation. One approach is to designate that no less than half the membership of the board be teachers from college, elementary school, or secondary school classrooms. Another approach would be to require one-third classroon teachers from elementary schools or secondary schools, one-third from higher education, and one-third from administration. Each state will need to work out its own concept of a balanced representation.

5. Standardized procedures and forms should be developed by the chief state school officer for nominees to the board. Each nominee should be selected in terms of his professional experience and knowledge in teacher education, accreditation, and certification, and his ability to communicate with the profession and with concerned groups outside the teaching profession. Specific criteria should include:

a. active practice in the teaching profession

b. a specific minimum experience (possibly five years)

c. appropriate certification, where required for professional assignment

6. The chief state school officer should establish an ad hoc review committee, representative of the profession, to screen nominees down to three acceptable candidates for each full-term vacancy on the board. Interim appointments should also be made from this list of acceptable candidates.

7. Members of the board should be selected from nominations made by members of the profession, professional education groups, special interest associations, learned societies, or institutional faculties.

8. The continuity of the board should be provided for by initially appointed members for overlapping terms so that no more than one-third of board membership changes in any one year. Terms of office of board members should be from four to seven years, and members who serve a full term should not be able to succeed themselves immediately.

9. The chairman of the board should be nominated and elected annually by secret ballot by and from the membership group. After the initial year, the chairman should have had at least one year of experience on the board.

10. The board should have an annual budget financed by public funds and administered by the state department of education. It should be authorized to receive donations and grants for special studies related to the central purpose of the board. Some feel that the profession itself should finance this activity; others see it as clearly a public responsibility no different from many other subsidized educational endeavors. One approach is to earmark licensure fees collected by the state.

11. Members of the board should serve without compensation, but all expenses in connection with board work should be paid. When necessary, school districts should be reimbursed by the state for the salary of a substitute teacher who fills in because of the absence of a board member from his regular position.

12. There should be a specified number of regularly scheduled meetings. The board should always be on call at the request of the chairman or a majority of the members.

13. The chief state school officer should be a consultant to the board, and the director of teacher education and certification should be closely identified with the board, possibly an ex officio member since he will have to, in a sense, administer the board's secretariat.

14. The state department of education should provide secretarial and administrative assistance to facilitate the activities of the board.

15. There should be carefully kept minutes, and all suggestions and advisories should be transmitted to the state department of education through regular administrative channels of the office of the chief state school officer.

16. The board should be responsible for making an annual report to the state department of education, appropriate key personnel closely related to teacher education, and through appropriate media, to the profession at large.

V. Conclusion

As stated earlier, each state will need to consider the recommendation for a professional standards board in the context of its own design for evolving professional self-determination.

The whole matter of building a legal bridge for professional self-determination is very much in a state of experimentation. What makes these guidelines important is that they constitute one avenue of approach whereby the teaching profession can accept the responsibility for making professional decisions.